

NEWS RELEASE



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**Department of Commerce and Insurance
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ATTORNEY GENERAL BOB COOPER SUPPORTS EFFORT AIMED AT REDUCING TEENS' "SOCIAL SOURCES" OF ALCOHOL

As the Fourth of July holiday approaches, Attorney General Bob Cooper and the Division of Consumer Affairs want to remind minors and their parents that the legal drinking age is 21 and providing alcohol to minors is against the law.

Attorney General Cooper and Director Mary Clement support "We Don't Serve Teens," a Federal Trade Commission endeavor to address the problem of underage drinking by focusing on the social sources that often provide teens with access to alcohol. According to Century Council surveys, teens report that alcohol is easy to get. Most teens who drink get the alcohol from "social" sources such as parents of other teens, older siblings, and other relatives and friends.

"I commend the Federal Trade Commission for launching this important effort," said Attorney General Cooper. "The message that's being conveyed to neighbors, relatives, and friends is "Don't Serve Teens. It's unsafe. It's illegal. It's irresponsible."

The campaign's centerpiece, www.dontserveteens.gov/, is an informative website prepared and maintained by the Federal Trade Commission that deals with some of the common cultural and social myths surrounding underage drinking.

Studies show that adults strongly support the current U.S. legal drinking age of 21, yet 65 percent of drinkers ages ten to 18 indicated that they got alcohol from family members or friends. In addition, Tennessee statistics show summer vacation is a particularly dangerous time for teens. In 2006, there were 509 alcohol-related traffic fatalities in Tennessee; 84 involved minors. In 2005, underage drinking cost the state of Tennessee \$1.4 billion.

In Tennessee it is unlawful for a person to provide alcohol to anyone under 21, with the exception of religious purposes, and is punishable by fines up to \$2,500 and/or imprisonment.

For more information about the campaign as well as practical tips on talking with kids about alcohol and what to say to friends and neighbors about not serving alcohol to teens, visit www.dontserveteens.gov/safesummer.html.

To report a licensed business or vendor contact the Tennessee Alcoholic Beverage Commission at tennessee.gov/abc/complaint.html.